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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 00758

FOR SECRETARY BROWN FROM AMBASSADOR LUCEY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS:
SUBJECT: CJCS FOREIGN VISITOR PROGRAM FOR FY78

REF: A. USDAO MEXICO MSG 0692 DTG 092029Z DEC 77;
B. USDAO MEXICO MSG 0695 DTG 092334Z DEC 77.

1. (U) I WANT TO EXPRESS MY STRONGEST PERSONAL RECOMMENDATION THAT THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE OF MEXICO, LTG FELIX GALVAN LOPEZ, VISIT THE UNITED STATES UNDER THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF FOREIGN VISITOR PROGRAM OR AS A PERSONAL INVITEE DURING FY78. IN EARLY DECEMBER, I MET WITH GENERAL GALVAN ON THE OCCASION OF A VISIT BY A U.S. DELEGATION, HEADED BY DR. PETER BOURNE OF THE WHITE HOUSE AND MS. MATHE FALCO OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO DISCUSS THE MEXICAN MILITARY'S PART IN THE NARCOTICS ERADICATION EFFORT. DR. BOURNE AND MS. FALCO SUGGESTED SUCH A VISIT TO THE U.S., AND GENERAL GALVAN SAID IF INVITED, HE WOULD COME. IN MY JUDGMENT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE FOLLOW THROUGH ON THIS EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PROMPTLY AND ARRANGE A VISIT FOR SOME TIME IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

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2. (C) THERE ARE MANY REASONS FOR MY RECOMMENDATION. ONE, OF COURSE, IS THAT UNDER GENERAL GALVAN'S LEADERSHIP, THE MEXICAN ARMY HAS MADE UNPRECEDENTED EFFORTS IN THE DRUG ERADICATION AND INTERDICTION PROGRAM. AS YOU KNOW, PRESIDENT CARTER, THROUGH HIS PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES, HAS COMMENDED GENERAL GALVAN'S ROLE, AMONG OTHERS, IN THAT PROGRAM. ANOTHER REASON IS LESS OBVIOUS BUT NEVERTHELESS

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IMPORTANT. GENERAL GALVAN AND SOME OF HIS KEY SUBORDINATES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN AGGRESSIVELY COURTED BY COMMUNIST BLOC NATIONS. FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, LAST YEAR MEXICO SENT MILITARY OFFICERS TO VISIT THE SOVIET UNION AND THERE ARE PLANS TO SEND A MILITARY ATTACHE TO RUSSIA. CUBA HAS BEEN MAKING QUIET, BUT NOT SO SUBTLE, OVERTURES TO GALVAN AND OTHER ARMY OFFICERS TO LOOK TO HER FOR CLOSER CONTACTS, TRAINING, AND EVEN HARDWARE. I BELIEVE A VISIT TO THE U.S. BY THE MESECDEF WOULD HELP BALANCE THE MEXICAN MILITARY'S PERSPECIVE, AND PERHAPS OPEN AVENUES AS WELL FOR FUTURE VISITS BY KEY SUBORDINATES.

3. (C) GENERAL GALVAN'S ROLE N TTE GM HE LEADE THE MEXICAN ARMY AND AIRFORCE IS AN INFLUENTIAL ONE PAR PARTICULARLY BECAUSE PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO HAS SUCH PERSONAL TRUST IN GALVAN. AT A TIME WHEN THE ILLEGAL ALIEN ISSUE AND MEXICAN PETROLEUM LOOM LARGE AS DIVISIVE ISSUES BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, THIS IS AN EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITY TO ENHANCE OUR FRIENDSHIP WITH A KEY MEMBER OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT. GALVAN'S VISIT WOULD BE THE FIRST FOR A SECDEF IN OFFICE IN OVER TEN YEARS. LUCEY

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